

The Daily Freeman.

EVENING EDITION

MONTPELIER, VT.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1863.

The DAILY FREEMAN will be discontinued after this date. We have given the reasons for this step on the fourth page.

1863.

The year which is just closing has been, abroad as well as at home, an eventful one, and will command a large space in history. Naturally enough the scenes of the great tragedy going forward in our own country have had an absorbing interest for us, and have, in a considerable measure, withdrawn our eyes from events transpiring in other countries, except so far as we have considered those events as intimately or remotely affecting our own struggle. In the United States the year was ushered in by the Proclamation of Emancipation, the most important State paper, the grandest and most beneficent national act, since the Declaration of Independence. President Lincoln, on the first of January 1863, baptised the new year in the glorious name of Freedom, and proclaimed liberty to millions of men, women and children, whose necks all their lives long have been bent beneath the yoke of a hard, brutal and unrequited servitude; and that day must ever stand in our country's calendar next in importance to the Fourth of July, 1776. The white race in the Republic date their official papers from the earlier period, but another race, as numerous as that which founded our Republic, will hereafter date their regeneration, the recognition of their manhood, the acknowledgment of their rights, from the year 1863. And so the year in its very birth was signalized by an event which will make it illustrious forever.

This Proclamation has been followed by an unexpected success. It has been sometimes said that President Lincoln is not a leader, and has only taken steps in advance in the great work of Emancipation, where the people had already preceded him; and this is doubtless to some extent true. But whether the Proclamation would have accomplished more toward the ultimate enfranchisement of the colored race in this country if it had been issued sooner, or not, its value and its effect have been marked and decisive; and there can now be little if any doubt that it will, in the end, accomplish the work of liberating every slave under the Stars and Stripes. Public opinion, not only in the Free States, but in the Border Slave States,—if we except, perhaps, Kentucky, which, however, is rapidly coming round to the true faith—stands by, supports and justifies the Proclamation, and exists in the anticipation that it will accomplish its perfect work. Indeed now the most servile Northern ally of Southern treason sees but one way of saving slavery, and that is by the success of the rebellion; and the military successes of the last eight months make that consummation anything but probable. The year 1863 has struck a fatal blow to slavery in the United States, and, while it may linger in some localities a few years more, death is working at its vitals.

The military successes of the year have been signal, brilliant and decisive. We do not need to recount them. Though in the first months of the year no marked victories cheered our hearts, and even down to the Fourth of July the fortune of war seemed adverse to the Union cause, yet then the clouds suddenly lifted, and the sun of victory—as glorious as that of Austerlitz—illuminated the ensign of the Republic at Gettysburg and on the Mississippi. Since that moment the limits of the rebellion have been gradually contracted. Gen. Banks is recovering the territory west of the Mississippi, and Gen. Grant, the consummate chieftain, has pushed the rebels continually toward the Gulf, redeeming Chickamauga by Chattanooga, where with wild enthusiasm, his brave troops rushed up the steep and perilous slopes of Lookout Mountain, and in that battle among the clouds drove before them, shattered and demoralized, the rebel army of the Southwest. The gallant Burnside captured and held East Tennessee, thus rescuing a long suffering people from the murderous tyranny of rebel despotism, and wresting from the Confederacy a portion of country of vital necessity to the rebel cause. If little progress has been made in Virginia, at least there the rebellion has gained nothing, the brave Army of the Potomac proving more than a match for the flower of the rebel army under its most accomplished Generals. At Charleston most substantial and most wonderful triumphs of scientific warfare have crowned the Union arms, and Gen. Gillmore has made his name illustrious by his brilliant successes. Fort Sumter has been reduced to a heap of ruins, and Charleston is now daily put in peril and fright by the shells from Federal batteries which are almost constantly being thrown into that nest of treason. In a word, treason has everywhere received the severest and most damaging blows during the past year; its armies have been defeated, the little credit it had abroad is almost gone, its finances at home are on the verge of collapse, and its speedy overthrow seems assured and certain.

While these great events have been enacting here,—the loyal people of the Union success fully waging war against the most gigantic treason that ever confronted any Government, and at the

same time inaugurating and carrying forward the humane, beneficent and Christian work of freeing a race from a degrading and brutalizing bondage,—Europe has been the theatre of grave and important occurrences. Poland has been struggling with small success to throw off the yoke of Russia. Denmark is now threatened with and is preparing for war. The cunning Emperor of France after having partially annexed Mexico to his realm, has startled his brother rulers with a proposal for a Congress to reconstruct the map of Europe; and that portion of the globe seems now trembling with the premonitory symptoms of a general and terrible war.

—But we have neither space nor time to dwell longer on the history of the departing year. To us, although a year of suffering, toil, hardship and sacrifice on a hundred battle fields,—fields yet made forever memorable and glorious by a heroism of endurance and fortitude, and a brilliancy of courage and a sublimity of faith never yet recorded in the annals of any other people,—it has been a year of almost unparalleled prosperity. The heavens have given sunshine and rain, and the earth has borne bountiful fruit; and the wealth of the nation has overflowed in abundant streams of charity, which have refreshed and blessed thousands of the poor and the suffering. But in our own annals, now and hereafter, the year 1863 is and will be most signally marked and illustrious as the era when a nation dared to be just, and to lift from the depths of slavery to a level with God's free men, a long oppressed race.

From North Carolina.

The North Carolina Times—The new loyal paper at Newbern—says in its issue of the 14th inst.:

"North Carolina is beginning to furnish her quota to the federal government. One loyal white regiment has been raised in this district, and is under the command of Colonel McChesney; and the second, under the command of Captain Charles Henry Foster, is rapidly filling up, and about three hundred men have been enlisted within the last six or eight weeks by his personal exertions. Another regiment of white soldiers from North Carolina has been raised by that most excellent man, General Burnside, in East Tennessee. To all this we must add the two regiments of colored volunteers that have been raised and are now in service. A cavalry regiment of blacks is also recruiting by Major Garrard, of the Third New York cavalry. This last regiment is obtaining nearly one hundred recruits a day. If the Department of North Carolina has been an expensive one, it must be allowed that she has become partially able to repay the government for the treasure expended, by furnishing her with men who are used to the country and known how to use a rifle."

RECONSTRUCTION.

North Carolina is speaking with no uncertain voice in reference to the great issues of the time. The Newbern Times, in an article on the President's recent proclamation, says:

"The reconstruction of the Union, the return of the seceding states to their former position, are now the immediate and great practical questions of the hour. Whatever speculative theories there may be on these subjects, we have no hesitancy in declaring that no state which has been guilty of the almost unpardonable crime of rebellion and secession, should be permitted to take her place safely and securely among the truly loyal states, whose eschutrons are unstained with treason, without a definite and unequivocal acknowledgment of the truths and potency of the proclamation. Let them understand that it is a great boon to get back again and be embraced by the filial bonds of our beloved Union, with the word slavery entirely stricken from their banners. When this great matter is permanently settled, either by proper action on the part of Congress or the requisite changes in the fundamental law of these states, they will undoubtedly have abundant reason to rejoice that they have at last been delivered from the blighting and deadly grasp of one of the greatest social, moral and political evils which has ever scourged the human race since the flood."

In the Raleigh Standard (rebel) of the 4th instant is an advertisement of forty eight deserters from the Fifty-ninth regiment North Carolina troops. They evidently don't like the rations.

A bill has been introduced in the North Carolina Senate, by M. F. Arrindell, to incorporate the North Carolina Volunteer Navy.

THE SIOUX INDIANS WANT PEACE.—We find the following in the St. Paul Pioneer of the 20th instant:

"We have received trustworthy information from Fort Garry that two headmen of Standing Buffalo's Band of Sisseton Sioux recently visited Fort Garry, for the purpose of asking the intervention of the British authorities in making peace for them with the Americans. They represented their people as tired of the war, suffering a great deal from privations, and anxious all of them to make peace. They asserted, too, that their band had been opposed to the war upon the whites, and had only a part fought them in self-defence, none of them having had part in any massacres.

"These two were, however, accompanied by a younger warrior who breathed nothing but war and desolation against the Americans. He was, however, pronounced a great boaster, a braggart, and was not thought at Fort Garry to represent any considerable number of Sisseton Sioux.

"These Indians gave to the officers at Fort Garry a description of the battles with General Sibley at the Big Mounds, near the Missouri, according to which they were unflinchingly forced to fight by the apparent danger to their women and children, and fought desperately so long as was necessary to secure their safety. They unhesitatingly acknowledged that the Indians were whipped by General Sibley and were glad enough to get away from him when their women and children had crossed the Missouri."

A paper called the North Carolina Times has just been started at Newbern by George Mills Joy, formerly connected with the Newbern Progress. It supports the entire war policy of the Government.

[From the Atlantic Monthly for January.] The Planting of the Apple-Tree.

BY WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

Come, let us plant the apple-tree!
Clear the tough groundward with the spade;
Wide let its hollow bed be made;
There gently lay the roots, and there
Sift the dark mould with kindly care,
And press it o'er them tenderly.

As, round the sleeping infant's feet,
We softly fold the cradle-sheet,
So plant we the apple-tree.

What plant we in the apple-tree?
Ruds, which the breath of summer days
Shall lengthen into leafy sprays;
Boughs, where the thrush with crimson breast
Shall haunt and sing and hide her nest.

We plant upon the sunny lea
A shadow for the noontide hour,
A shelter from the summer shower,
When we plant the apple-tree.

What plant we in the apple-tree?
Sweet for a hundred flowery springs,
To lead the May-winds restles wings,
When, from the orchard-rook he pours
Its fragrance through our open doors.

A world of blossoms for the bee,
Flowers for the sick girl's silent room,
For the glad infant's prisms of bloom,
When we plant the apple-tree.

What plant we in the apple-tree?
Fruits that shall swell in sunny June,
And rodden in the August noon,
And drop, as gentle airs come by,
That fan the place September sky.

While children, wild with noisy glee,
Shall scent their fragrance as they pass,
And search for them the tufted grass
At the foot of the apple-tree.

And when above this apple-tree
Winter stars are quivering bright,
And winds go howling through the night,
Girls, whose young eyes o'erflow with mirth,
Shall peep its fruit by cottage hearth.

And guests in prouder homes shall see,
Heaped with the orange and the grape,
As fair as they in tint or shape,
The fruit of the apple-tree.

The fruitage of this apple-tree
Winds and our flag of stripe and star
Shall bear to courts that lie afar,
Where men shall wonder at the view,
And ask in what fair groves they grew.

And they who roam beyond the sea
Shall look, and think of childhood's day,
And long hours passed in summer play
In the shade of the apple-tree.

Each year shall give this apple-tree,
A deeper flush of rosy bloom,
A deeper maze of verdurous gloom,
And looser when the frost-clouds lower,
The crisp brown leaves in thicker shower.

The years shall come and pass, but we
Shall hear no longer, where we lie,
The summer's songs, the autumn's sigh,
In the boughs of the apple-tree.

And time shall waste this apple-tree,
Oh, when its aged branches throw
Thin shadows on the sward below
Shall fraud and force and iron will
Oppress the weak and helpless still!

What shall the task of mercy be,
Amid the tolls, the stripes, the tears
Of those who live when length of years
Is wasting this apple-tree?

"Who planted this old apple-tree?"
The children of that distant day
Thus to some aged man shall say:
And, gazing on its mossy stem,
The gray-haired man shall answer them.

"A poet of the land was he,
Born in the rude, but cool old times;
'Tis said he made some quaint old rhymes
On planting the apple-tree."

THE OPERATIONS AGAINST CHARLESTON.—A letter from the fleet off Charleston 24th inst., to the American, says:

As I intimated in my last, we have settled down here into the expectation of a month or two more of inactivity. The strike among the engineers at the North, which has delayed the completion of the monitors, and deprived our iron-clad fleet of reinforcements which were expected here more than a month since, has been the primary cause of the delay and its continuance. The disaster to the Wheelbarrow and the coming of the winter season, with its constant storms, has still further enforced this delay.

Two months hence spring will be advanced here, and with our iron-clad force increased by three or four new monitors, we will be prepared to take advantage of the healthiest season and most pleasant part of the year. Let us hope, if Grant does not steal a march on us by one of his famous rear attacks, that Charleston will then fall, and the long-suffering sailors and soldiers of this army and squadron reap the reward they have well merited, of complete and decisive triumphs.

In the meantime, if we cannot look for immediate and decisive results here, no great disasters need be apprehended. Gen. Gillmore's position is impregnable, and Admiral Dahlgren has sufficient iron-clad force to hold the harbor up to Sumter. The monitor Lehigh, by the time this reaches you, will have completed the repairs rendered necessary by the hammering she received when aground, and Capt. Bryson, who always likes to be where there is a chance for a fight, will soon have his vessel back to Charleston. The Patapsco, Captain Stevens, has also nearly completed her repairs, and will shortly relieve the Nantuxet, at Warsaw Sound. Both the Patapsco and Lehigh have been provided with extra deck plates that will add to their invulnerability.

A REBEL WAIL.—The Richmond Enquirer says: "Our losses by the enemy are serious; those of East Tennessee are incalculable. We are not only deprived of the vast flour mills of that country which copiously supplied the army, but of vast machine shops extensively organized at Knoxville. We are cut off from the coal, iron and copper mines which are worth millions to us. All the copper rolling mills at Cleveland, superintended by Col. Peet, Government Agent, which were burned by the enemy, formerly turned out six thousand pounds of copper per day. Over 3,000,000 pounds have been delivered to the government. This was the only

Eli Thayer has opened an office in New York, for the purpose of promoting emigration to the South.

From the Christian Messenger.

From the Army.

CAMP NEAR BRANDY STATION, Va.,
Dec. 22nd, 1863.

DEAR MESSENGER:—There is quite a monotony attending camp life. The daily routine of duty is nearly the same, but soldiers will have something new, and marvelous, as topics of humor and conversation, and events are occasionally transpiring quite out of the ordinary course. On the afternoon of Friday our division was called out to witness the painful spectacle, of seeing two men shot. It was a matter of regret to us, that both of these unfortunate men were from the State of Vermont. The crime for which they were executed was that of desertion, their names were John Tague, of the 5th Vermont, and George E. Blowers, of the 2nd Vt. Regiment.

When we repaired to the place of execution, we found that their graves were already dug, and most of the Division were present, drawn up in a square, in due form, waiting the arrival of the prisoners. There seemed to be some delay, and it was rumored that efforts were then being made to procure their pardon, which it was hoped might prove successful, as all appeared anxious to be spared the scene. But soon two ambulances were seen approaching, and the troops were called to attention, and the band commenced playing a dirge. Each prisoner occupied an ambulance containing the coffin in which he was to be interred, surrounded by a guard of armed men, and followed by their respective chaplains. They made a halt at the open graves, and the prisoners and coffins were removed. As these were arranged in due order, each prisoner, as he was marched a few steps in front with head uncovered, listened to the reading of the alleged offence, and the finding of the court. The prisoners were then asked if they had anything to say, but they had no remarks to make, save Blowers, who asked to see his brother, who belonged to the same regiment and company with himself, but it was found, on enquiry, that he was not present. The chaplains were then allowed to proceed with their services. As the 2nd regiment is destitute of a chaplain, Rev. D. A. Mack, the efficient Chaplain of the Third Regiment, had given careful attention to the spiritual interests of the prisoner from that regiment, and in connection with Chaplain Hale, of the 5th regiment, officiated on this occasion. The prisoners reverently knelt as Chaplain Hale, followed by Chaplain Mack, offered fervent prayer imploring in their behalf, the pardoning mercies of God, through the merits of a crucified Redeemer. As these exercises closed, a few words passed between the chaplains and the prisoners, the former shaking hands and taking a final leave of them. The prisoners then walked, each to his coffin, on which he knelt supported by a stake, which had been driven there for the purpose, on which he hung his hat, and to which he held by his right hand. The guard were marched to a position in front of them, an officer stepped forward and adjusted a target upon the bosom of each of the prisoners, and then returned to his command. The guard as directed, then made ready, took aim and fired, and both prisoners fell at the discharge, pitching forward upon the ground. The division marched around the spot where they lay and were afterward interred, as it was found upon due examination, that in each case the shots were fatal.

There was a marked difference in the appearance of the prisoners, as they passed the trying scene connected with their execution. Tague, appeared haughty and defiant. When removing his hat to hear the reading of his sentence, he threw it indignantly upon the ground, holding up his head with great apparent firmness and bravado, and this spirit he exhibited to the last, and as a soldier, we learn, he had been disobedient and troublesome.

Blowers appeared dejected and sorrowful, but still bore up under the circumstances, with manly fortitude. We learn from his Chaplain that he manifested during his confinement, a spirit of penitence and commendable anxiety for his spiritual interests. He was induced by a companion to desert while intoxicated, which he said he ever regretted when he was sober.—It was also known that his wife, who resides at Arlington Vt., had strongly urged him to desert. She doubtless little thought what might be the sad results. It is said that a young man now condemned to be shot in one of the Maine regiments, was strongly advised to desert by his own father!

Such scenes as the one we have just witnessed here, should not only be a warning to men in service, but to their friends at home. Those who are really our friends, as well as

the friends of the country, will use their influence to encourage our soldiers in the field to do their duty with cheerfulness and fidelity. It is much better to die in a good cause, than incur the infamy and crime of its desertion. Desertions have become so frequent among us, that it is evidently unwise for government to suffer it longer to be done with impunity, and it is hoped that these painful inflictions will have a salutary influence in preventing the crime.

A friend has just called at our quarters, who is evidently disposed to draw a valuable practical lesson from this execution, which has left a deep impression upon his mind, and inquires if men are thus punished, for the crime of deserting the service of their country, what will be the punishment of those who desert the cause of Christ, and go over to the ranks of his enemies? We answered him by quoting Heb. 10, 28—29, which we would advise every backslider to read and ponder.

The position of the army remains unchanged. We have recently had some winter weather, that would not disgrace Vermont, at this season of the year. The ground has frozen, but we have no snow here, but can see it upon the mountains in the distance.

At our recent chaplains' meeting, the lady of the house, where it was held, with her children, asked the privilege of attending to hear the sermon, and enjoy the exercises. We are told that many families here for some two years past, have not had the opportunity of hearing a sermon, or of attending a religious meeting. There is a fearful desolation that is reigning around us, in this portion of Virginia. A chaplain in referring to this, said that recently a lady in this section of Virginia, gave this, to him, unlooked for reason, for this infliction upon the Old Dominion, "that they had refused to obey the command of God, in letting the oppressed go free." The people of this state may be slow to acknowledge this truth, but as the brethren of Joseph, in the hour of their distress thought of the agonizing cry of their brother, in the anguish which they inflicted, and would not relieve, so we doubt not, amid the poverty and ruin of this hour, many who once lived in splendor upon the unrequited toil of slaves, now think of the clanking fetters, bleeding backs, and stifled sobs of the bondman, to which sordid avarice and worldly prosperity made them once indifferent. God has a design in the chastisements which he allows to overtake us, and those who feel the rod, will be likely to know the reason of its infliction.

We are making some progress in regard to the prospect of obtaining furloughs, by regiments for the purpose of spending at least, thirty days in Vermont. It is now understood that recruits, who have two years more to serve can be furloughed, with the re-enlisted veterans, by a pledge to the government, that when their two years of service have expired, if required, they will list for three years more, on the same terms of the old veterans, that now re-enlist. This appears to be rather a taking proposition among our men, especially that portion that gives promise of a long furlough at home. There has been some delay and may be still more, in getting the requisite papers to consummate this arrangement. It is now understood, that some regiments of the Vermont Brigade, are ready to take the War Department at their offer, and all that remains to be done, is to have them duly mustered and paid and they are ready to start for Vermont. The fifth and sixth regiments are hoping to get away this week. The sixth desires to be allowed to report at Montpelier, the place where they rendezvoused at the time of their organization. The men are very anxious, if possible, to be able to spend New-Years at home. Whatever may be the result in regard to regiments, as such, it is quite certain, that many of our men here will re-enlist, and spend a portion of the present winter, with their families in Vermont. The men are evidently in good spirits, and this excitement about going home, is doing them good. When they get there they will help the recruiting service, if Vermont should then need, any help in this department.

P. S.—Since writing the above, an order has been received in regard to the recruits in our Vermont regiments, which seriously dashes our hopes of going to Vermont as regiments, as those recruits, who have not as yet, served twenty-one months are not to be allowed the anticipated furlough, as heretofore expected. Many of our men will doubtless re-enlist and take their furlough of 30 days, but the regiments will not be able to go as such. This will be quite a disappointment to many of the Vermonters now in service here.